

Post celebrates 19th annual colors ceremony



Barbara L. Sellers

The past, present and future of all branches of the military service were represented during the Massing of Colors ceremony.

By **Barbara L. Sellers**
Northwest Guardian

All branches of the military service were represented Sunday during the 19th annual Massing of the Colors ceremony at Soldiers Field House. They represented patriots who have served, patriots now serving — and even those who will serve in the future.

“This is a celebration of America to commemorate the service of our nation’s patriots, and we are diversified,” said Col. (Ret.) Isabelle Swartz, chairperson. “We are honoring, also, all of the noncommissioned officers of the armed forces and their families. We are also honoring our foremost patriot, President George Washington, and Sergeant John Ordway of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, as the only man who wrote in his log every day.”

About 100 color guards from all over the Puget Sound area took

part in the ceremony.

“They include active-duty Soldiers, Reserves, National Guard, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, ROTC, and many women’s service organizations,” Swartz said.

John E. Lee, director of the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs, read a proclamation by Governor Christine Gregoire, recognizing those who gave their lives in defense of our nation, as well as those who still serve today in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

“We honor these brave men and women who stand ready to defend our homeland and protect America,” Gregoire wrote.

Lee also talked about the responsibilities of NCOs and first sergeants.

“It’s the NCOs who come to work every day, charged with the responsibility of looking into the eyes of all of the Soldiers under them — leading

them, and feeling the full weight of that responsibility,” he said. “I am incredibly proud of our NCO Corps of today (and also of) our senior officers, our general officers, and of our young leaders of tomorrow.”

Lee also said many things would not be possible if it were not for steadfast love and support that spouses and family members provide.

“None of our jobs would be nearly as easy if it were not for our wonderful spouses,” Lee said.

He closed by asking all service members to contact the DVA to make sure they have access to all of the benefits to which they are entitled.

The Puget Sound Chapter of the Military Order of World Wars, the Tacoma Council Navy League, McChord Air Force Base Chapter of the Air Force Association, and the Fort Lewis Chapter of the Association of the U.S. Army, sponsored the event.

“The Massing of Colors has grown over the years, and this event always represents a team effort — a lot of hard work by a lot of volunteers,” Swartz said. “The Army installation has always been very supportive and gracious for letting us use this facility, too, and we appreciate that very much.”

Gregoire’s husband, Mike Gregoire, was present and served as his wife’s representative at the ceremony.

Dr. John P. Jewell, sculptor, also attended the ceremony and put a miniature model of his Ordway statue on display for everyone to see.

Lee thanked Maj. Gen. (Ret.) John Hemphill for taking charge of raising the funds for the Ordway statue that will be added to the Fort Lewis Memorial Park.

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DOD requests investigation into death of former athlete

By **Gerry J. Gilmore**
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department has asked the U.S. Army to launch a criminal investigation into the circumstances surrounding the death of Cpl. Pat Tillman, who was killed in the spring of 2004 during a combat operation in Afghanistan.

On March 3, the DOD inspector general’s office notified the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command at Fort Belvoir, Va., of the need to reexamine the details of Tillman’s death to determine if he died as the result of a possible criminal act, a U.S. Army spokesman said here today.

Tillman, who’d been a National Football League player with the Arizona Cardinals before he enlisted in 2001, was killed April 22, 2004 in Afghanistan. He was 27 years old. Tillman and his brother enlisted in the Army after the terrorist attacks on the United States.

Tillman was a member of the 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, when he was killed.

Sunday on NBC’s “Meet the Press,” host Tim Russert asked Marine Gen. Peter Pace, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, why previous investigations apparently haven’t answered all questions about Tillman’s death.

“First of all, the Tillman family has gone through enormous anguish, and the fact that that has happened to them is really regrettable,” Pace said.

And, each of the previous investigations was performed as thoroughly as possible by the investigating officers at the time, Pace said. “But in the review process, it was determined that some other factor needed to be looked at to ensure that we had a complete picture,” Pace said.

For example, previous investigations into Tillman’s death had concluded there was no apparent evidence of wrongdoing.

However, “the investigators did not specifically look at whether or not there was criminal activity involved in Tillman’s death,” Pace said.

The Army conducted three investigations into Tillman’s death — two at unit level and one by U.S. Army Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, N.C. The inquiries concluded that friendly fire killed Tillman, the Army spokesman said.

The service disciplined seven Soldiers in Tillman’s unit. Three received reprimands for failing to “provide adequate command and control” during the incident and four received Article 15 non-judicial punishment for “failure to exercise sound judgment and fire discipline,” according to Army officials.

“The U.S. Army remains committed to thoroughly investigating each battlefield death case,” Army spokesman Paul Boyce said today. “We owe this to the families and to the American public and we take this seriously.”

Boyce extended the Army’s condolences to Tillman’s family, “and to every family who has lost a loved one in the war on terrorism.”

Boyce said that re-opening a death investigation is not a rare occurrence.



Photos by Jason Kaye

Participants in a 2nd Cav. Regt. Mangudai wade ashore at Solo Point after a ride from the Port of Tacoma on an LCM manned by the 385th Trans. Bn. The exercise was geared towards the regiment’s captains and lasted three days.

‘Mangudai’ exercise tests Soldiers’ mettle

By **Bob Reinert**
Northwest Guardian

It didn’t exactly resemble the Normandy landing, but that wasn’t the intent, anyway.

When the landing craft ramp dropped and 34 captains and senior leaders from the 2nd Cavalry Regiment splashed ashore March 3 at Solo Point, they had been awake for nearly three days. During that time, they marched to Gray Army Airfield in full battle gear, boarded a C-130 transport, flew to Yakima Training Center, walked 50 hilly kilometers with rucksacks weighing as much as 70 pounds, hit five objectives, trucked to the Port of Tacoma, boarded the LCM and staged the simulated beach assault.

And they weren’t through yet. After a short rest, they picked up their weapons and rucksacks one last time and headed up the steep, winding road that would finally bring them to the trucks parked at the crest of the hill.

Welcome to the 2nd Cav. Regt.’s latest version of “Mangudai,” an exercise designed to test the mettle of its troop commanders before they lead men into combat.

“It builds confidence in our leaders when they go back and take over their ... companies,” said 2nd Cav. Regt. Command Sgt. Maj. John Troxell, who went through the exercise along with Col. Jon Lehr, the regimental commander. “They’ve been through this exercise that validates what they are as leaders. It is a critical part of our leader-development program.”

Troxell pointed out that the cap-

tains had come to 2nd Cav. Regt. with impressive backgrounds that include bachelors’ and masters’ degrees.

“They have all these credentials, you know?” Troxell said. “But we have to validate the credentials to lead our Soldiers on the battlefield. And we do this through these Mangudai exercises.”

In this, 2nd Cav. Regt.’s second Mangudai exercise — named after an elite unit of Genghis Khan’s army — the captains were pushed to their limits. Each slept just two hours and ate one MRE, a rice ball with a sardine, and an energy bar. They endured temperatures that dipped into the high 20s and sustained winds of 40-50 mph.

Lehr said the idea was “to develop hardened combat leaders that are comfortable operating under adverse, harsh conditions. The leader must be comfortable in a very ambiguous situation, with little time to complete the mission, in the absence of clearly defined objectives, without the required resources.”

According to Capt. Dan Rausch, assistant S-3 with 2nd Cav. Regt., who helped plan the exercise, Mangudai shortens the amount of time needed for a commander to assess his leaders.

“It probably takes six to eight months, outside of this type of event, for a commander to assess his officers,” Rausch said. “And this way, he combines them all in one group, and he has a line of sight at all times during the exercise. It gives him a very good look, all at once.”

Troxell added that the shared experience of going through Mangudai together taught the captains to work as a team in a fluid situation.

“They didn’t know where they were



Officers from 2nd Cav. Regt. pull security after landing at Solo Point. The exercise is designed to test the mettle of troop commanders before they lead men into combat.

going,” Troxell said. “They had to plan en route.”

In 2nd Cav. Regt.’s first Mangudai three months ago, two participants were unable to complete the exercise. The results were better this time around.

“We didn’t have anybody get sick or anybody fall out,” Troxell said. “We started with 30 captains and finished with 30 captains on this exercise.”

Troxell said that 2nd Cav. Regt. will hold two more Mangudais this summer — another for captains and one for senior noncommissioned officers.

“Now we’re going to expand it, because we’re getting so much success out of it in developing our leaders,” said

Troxell, who noted that the exercises will continue to change.

“Who knows what we’ll do next time?” Troxell said. “We’re always looking for something more to challenge our leaders.”

Those leaders need to be “agile and adaptable,” Lehr said. “To me, that means breaking some Army cultural norms. We must develop leaders that don’t focus on not having, but rather how they can accomplish the mission in a severely degraded set of conditions.

“This is agile and adaptable, in my opinion. Mangudai is one tool in our arsenal that allows us to create leaders able to do this.”

Advance party from Fort Lewis impressed with facilities in Germany

By **Seth Robson**
Stars and Stripes

GRAFENWÖHR, Germany — Facilities here impressed an advance party from the 2nd Cavalry (Stryker) Regiment, which is due to move to nearby Vilseck from Fort Lewis this summer.

Grafenwöhr Garrison officials, who also oversee Vilseck, are hard at work preparing for the regiment — which will be the first Europe-based Stryker Brigade Combat Team — which includes more than 3,500 Soldiers and thousands of family members.

I Corps and Fort Lewis public affairs chief of external communication Joseph Piek said the 26-person advance party visited Grafenwöhr and Vilseck for four days last month to touch base with various offices and agencies.

“The goal was to help ensure minimal stress and turbulence during the transition for the Soldiers and families of the brigade once they begin arriving in Germany this summer,” he said.

The team was happy with what it found at Vilseck and within U.S. Army Europe, he said.

“We appreciate the open arms approach that all of USAREUR are taking in the preparation of Vilseck for our arrival and ensuring all of our Soldiers and families are taken care of,” he said.

The facilities at Vilseck were “top notch,” Piek said. “With the construction that is currently ongoing, the future of the SBCT looks bright.”

For example, the fitness facilities within Grafenwöhr Garrison were some of the best in the Army and would help support the Soldiers with their rigorous

training, said Piek, who also praised the garrison’s medical facilities, schools at Vilseck and a new Post Exchange being built at Grafenwöhr.

“In regards to training, the great aspect of Vilseck is that we will have a training area in our backyard. In all, the leaders and Soldiers are excited about the quality of life that the Vilseck community has to offer,” he said.

One item that came out of the visit was increased awareness of the need to train Soldiers on driving the Strykers in Europe, Piek said, adding that it was something any unit deploying overseas

needed to do and something that would help establish a good relationship with neighbors.

“Germany will be a great tour for the Soldiers and their families because it offers great opportunities for off-duty time,” Piek said. “Most of the Soldiers will find that being stationed in Germany is a very rewarding experience that they will remember for the rest of their careers.”

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